

New Castle City Planning Commission Meeting
Minutes
October 28, 2013 -- 6:30 p.m.
City of New Castle's Town Hall

Members Present: David Bird, Chair
David Baldini
Joe DiAngelo
Dorsey Fiske
Josephine Moore

Members Absent: Jonathan Justice
Susan Marinelli
Florence Smith
Vera Worthy

Also Present: Debbie Pfeil, Senior Planner, URS
Jeff Bergstrom, Building Inspector/Fire Marshal

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. Mr. Baldini was welcomed to the Planning Commission.

Minutes (8/26/13) – A correction was noted on page 1. **A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as amended. Motion approved.**

Report on Parking Study – The study was presented at the last City Council meeting and its status will be published in the *New Castle Weekly*.

Update on Waterfront Study – Presented to City Council for informational purposes.

New Castle Way Finding Study – Linda Ratchford, Project Leader, is working on pricing and fabrication specifications for signage within town that has been approved by the Planning Commission and City Council. They are seeking feedback on bus parking locations. Ms. Fiske expressed concern about missing signs in the City. Reports of missing signage should be reported to Public Works and Councilman Ted Megginson.

Potential Development Proposal for Downtown Gateway District – Eric Mayer, owner of the Abex property on 7th Street, gave a history of his ownership (1995) of the site. The site has been rezoned to the Downtown Gateway. The location for development is the small parking lot on Route 9, which is located within the flood plain. (*Drawings provided.*) Mr. Mayer proposes a 30-unit condominium complex, 10 units per floor with parking under the first floor. The location of the parking is needed to allow all units a view of the river and fits within the 45 foot height limit in the Code. Plans are for 70 plus parking spaces. There are no environmental issues. Ms. Pfeil said what is being presented tonight does not comply with the Downtown Gateway zoning. It is understood that the applicant is seeking acceptance from this body to move forward with preparing a formal site plan. There are no regulations pertaining to the number of rentals. According to Mr. Bergstrom, the units are considered “high-end.” Ms. Pfeil recommended getting a legal interpretation from the City Solicitor of the definition of a

“story” as it reads in the Zoning Code to determine if the parking level counts as a floor. This will determine whether the applicant needs to approach the Board of Adjustment or if criteria is met to return to the Planning Commission. If the applicant goes to the Board of Adjustment, that decision would be needed before returning to the Planning Commission.

Discussion on obtaining automatic railroad crossing gates, particularly for the crossing on Route 273 – Mr. Bergstrom reported that at present crossings use signals and he has submitted a request for signage and crossing gates. A letter from resident Bill Simpson questioning the lack of gates on railroad crossings in the City was read into the record. There are five schools in the area that generate additional vehicle and bus traffic. Speed and single-hull tank cars are safety concerns. Ms. Pfeil suggested a meeting with DelDOT, Norfolk Southern, the police chief and a City representative to review funding and regulations. City Council would need to facilitate such a meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Fiske that the Planning Commission recommend to City Council that it facilitate automatic crossing gates at crossings in the City as soon as possible. Ms. Moore seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Budget Status – No report.

Commissioner Comments – Mr. Bird acknowledged and extended appreciation to Ms. Fiske for her three years of service on the Historic Area Commission.

Dates for the November and December meetings was discussed.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Debbie Turner
Stenographer